

Name: _____

The Walking Tree

-Summer-

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-Winter-

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-Place-

- Performer;
- Spectacle;
- Overseer of work;
- Problem solver;
- Always there with the broader view and the long-term plan.

-Plays-

Walking Tree Plays:

- Give them respite
 - Seize their attention
 - Bar the way
 - Go unnoticed
- Obvious Plays:
- Confront them
 - Draw them out
 - Put them off
 - Set a scene for them
 - Size them up
 - Waylay them
 - Ride disaster down
 - Sniff the wind
 - Stand against the tide

+2, +2, +2, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, +1, 0, 0, -1, -1

-Trappings-

- No wagon can hold you comfortably. In the unlikely event the circus is traveling faster than your easy stride, you can, if you wish, compact yourself and ride along in some friendly cart. To make a place yours, to rest and to welcome guests, walk around the space you wish holding your hands out and pivoting around one of them. The space you cover is yours till you leave it; no rain or wind will come unwelcome, no creeping bug or beast will cause disturbance, no lump or pebble disrupt your sweet-smelling bed beneath the stars.

You carry a few things:

- A glossy wooden flute etched in silver, which will summon two of your kin, *Taxus Baccata* and *Prunus Spinosa*, to your aid.
- A pocketful of high summer sunlight.
- A scrap of iron, no bigger than an arrow's head, encased within scar tissue, and yet you live.
- A colony of gem-like ants that keep you free from all debris.
- The constant heartbeat of the world.

-Bindings-

- — has trouble telling me apart from other trees. Every time I speak to them, I *seize their attention*. Who?
- — has known me since I was first a seedling. I can never *set a scene for them* or *go unnoticed* by them. Who?

When you give someone respite, let them lean on you, shelter them from the wind or sun, or carry them in your limbs, roll. **On a 10+ hit**, you give them lasting respite: ask them what grief, regret, or burden they set aside forever, and invite them to advance to full summer if they choose. **On a 7-9 hit**, you give them respite for a time: ask them what grief, regret, or burden they're able to forget, and invite them to advance toward summer if they choose. **On a miss**, you give them respite as for a 7-9 hit, but you must take up what they set down, and advance toward winter yourself.

When you seize someone's attention with sudden, surprising speech or movement, roll. **On a 10+ hit**, choose 1 of the following for them and they choose 1 as well. **On a 7-9 hit**, they choose 1:

- They become rooted in place, unable to move until someone else lifts them away.
- They feel blooming within them a new and previously unheld need.
- They remember, with most uncomfortable clarity, a time they have made another feel small and insignificant.
- They are aware of the slow passing of time, each heartbeat seemingly a year, filled with lifetimes of minute detail and experience, with endless ages yet before them.
- They are aware of the great rushing pace of time, whole aeons that flare up and are gone before the universe even notices, their existence a mere moment.
- They recognize a way in which they are wounded.

On a miss, you have their attention but they joke or jeer. Advance toward winter.

When you bar the way, roll. **On a 10+ hit**, choose up to 4. **On a 7-9 hit**, choose 1 or 2:

- Who do you sweep up into your branches and hold high in the air?
- Who do you trip with your roots and hold pinned to the ground?
- Who do you tangle with thorns and vines and hold caught?
- Who do you crush between trunk and stone, ?
- Who do you trap in hollows, swallow whole?

On a miss, choose at least 2, but ask the MC, don't answer for yourself, as so: "Who do I sweep up into my branches? Who do I trip with my roots?"

When you go unnoticed, roll. The eyes of others pass over you, allowing you to observe everything and yet be undisturbed. **On any hit**, you witness people in their unguarded moments, what they say and do, and you are left alone, able to stay without their attention. Ask the MC what they reveal. **On a 10+ hit**, you're able to leave freely when you choose, still unnoticed. **On a 7-9 hit**, though, you must choose whether to reveal yourself by leaving or to stay until they depart. **On a miss**, you can stay unnoticed, but also choose 1:

- Their eyes never quite leave you, at least the corners, and their words and manners are stilted and overly aware, as you make them uneasy but not enough to confront you.
- They stumble into you or tread on you or hang things from your limbs, mistaking you for part of the landscape until you speak or move.

You may take either as an insult, but they may also feel affronted when they discover you are onto them or have been there all along.

The Walking Tree

To play the *Walking Tree*, create your name, your summer & winter, your plays, your place, your trappings, and your bindings.

Your Job:

Your job as a player is to:

- Make your character vivid.
- Play your part in the circus.
- Take the bad with the good.

Name:

Choose the Latin name of a tree or bush. If you want, you can also choose a common name you go by. Decide who gets to call you by which name, and you need not answer if they make a mistake. If this means you use only your proper Latin name, so be it.

Examples: *Quercus robur*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Malus sylvestris*, *Betula lenta*, *Ulmus glabra*, *Abies grandis*, *Corylus avellana*, *Tsuga mertensiana*, *Castanea sativa*, *Salix Babylonica*.

Summer & Winter:

From each of the following, choose one for summer and one for winter:

- Fresh earth, songbirds, flower-perfumed air, sunbeams, windchimes, moss, buds, cooling shade, twirling breezes, stone fruit, pan pipes, caterpillars, nuts, sucking mud, fallen leaves, pitted ground, clacking twigs, birds of prey, woodsmoke, heavy snowfall, tufts of fur, thorns, drums.
- Black eyes, bright eyes, crinkled eyes, stern mouth, wide smile, tangled hair, rustling hair, bushy brows, drooping mustache, long fingers, bent limbs, twisting body, lithe body, rough skin, freckles, sun-kissed skin, sinewy muscles, knobby joints, extra joints, deep wrinkles.
- Pale green, tan, robin's egg blue, soft gray, deep green, speckled, pale pink, bright copper, pine green, sunflower, burnt orange, dark copper, olive, scarlet, dark brown, stark cold gray, sable.
- Gauze, quilted coat, curling lace, long full skirts, snug-cut trousers, knots of flowers and colored ribbons, cross-hatched embroidery, long toed shoes, gloves, woven vine belt, velvet, battered cap, suit of bark, well-placed moss and leaves, long open vest with many pockets.
- Mannish, womanish, androgynish, boyish, girlish, childish, queerish, sexy, sexless, charming, forbidding, enticing, unapproachable, —.

You can choose 2 sometimes if you want to, why shouldn't you?

Example (summer / winter):

Moss, buds / pan pipes
Crinkled eyes / sinewy muscles
Robin's egg blue / burnt orange
Snug-cut trousers / suit of bark
Mannish, charming / mannish, forbidding

Begin play in full summer: mark all of the lines in the summer column.

Plays:

You can make all of the obvious plays and the *Walking Tree* plays. Mark +2 next to your choice of three plays, +0 next to two, -1 next to two, and +1 next to all of the rest. These are your plays' rolls.

Place:

In the circus, at need, you can take any and all of the listed roles.

Trappings:

You get all of the listed trappings.

Bindings:

Everybody introduces themselves by name, summer & winter (or the corresponding), and place, including any details they like. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for bindings. On your turn, ask for volunteers:

- One of you has trouble telling me apart from other trees. **Who?** Every time I speak to you, I **seize your attention**.
- One of you has known me since I was first a seedling. **Who?** I can never **set a scene for you or go unnoticed by you**.

If no one volunteers, so be it and move on. If more than one volunteers, accept them all, choose one, or ask them to decide between them, as you like.

On the others' turns, volunteer as you choose.

-Consequences-

Summer & winter:

When you move toward summer, erase one of the marks in the winter column and mark the same line in the summer column.

When you move toward winter, erase one of the marks in the summer column and mark the same line in the winter column.

Whenever you move toward summer or toward winter, take 1 from one of your plays' rolls and add 1 to a different play's roll. Choose intentionally, to match your feeling about the change. Keep to a minimum of -2 and a maximum of +3.

Violence:

Violence in fairyland is considered visceral, irrevocable, and horrifying. **When you're wounded, shocked, affronted, or dismayed**, you must immediately choose 1:

- You die.
- You withdraw at once in a cold, dignified fury.
- You writhe, moan, and curse in a display of melodramatic agony.
- You proceed immediately and fully to winter.
- You consider yourself cruelly mistreated and maimed, and will long nurse your injuries and your grudge.

True death: there are only a few things that can truly kill a fairy. Cold iron is one; there are others. There's no coming back from true death.

Insults:

When someone insults you, you're allowed by fairy law and your fairy nature to answer it. It's considered to be your own unimpeachable right to weigh the insult and respond in due measure, so only you can choose what form your answer should take and how extreme it should be. Other fairies may gossip, but no fairy would rightly stand before you and assert that you've overstepped.

Beholden:

When you are beholden, fairy law and your fairy nature demand that you make good and deliver the balance. If you are recalcitrant or uneager to do so, your debtor may consider it an insult or a worse offense.